

CLAIMS

1. Apparatus, operatively coupled by a communications channel to a host computer, the host computer having a first disk drive, the apparatus comprising:

a second disk drive;

a user-activatable button, associated with said second disk drive;

circuitry which, in response to a press of said user-activatable button, causes a backup of at least some data from said first disk drive to said second disk drive by a process which includes sending notification of said press of said user-activatable button to said host computer over said communications channel.

2. Apparatus, as claimed in claim 1, wherein said second disk drive is an external disk drive.

3. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said second disk drive has a housing and wherein said user-activatable button is associated with said data storage device by being mounted on said housing.

4. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said second disk drive has a housing and wherein said housing is non-rigidly attached to said host computer.

5. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein said communications channel includes a communications channel selected from the group consisting of a Universal Serial Bus (USB) communications channel, an IEEE 1394 communications channel, a wireless communications channel and an Ethernet communications channel.

6. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1 further comprising an indicator which indicates execution of said backup.

7. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein, during normal use, operation of said user-activatable button suffices, substantially by itself, to initiate said backup, in the absence of a need for user input other than said operation of said user-activatable button.

8. Apparatus, in communication with a host computer, over a communication channel, the host computer communicating with a first disk drive, the apparatus comprising:

a second disk drive;

a user-activatable button associated with said second disk drive;

circuitry which, in response to a press of said user-activatable button, causes a backup of at least some data from said first disk drive to said second disk drive,

wherein, prior to normal operation of said apparatus for backup, said host computer is provided with configuration information relating to said backup, for use during said backup.

9. A data storage apparatus, operatively coupled to a host device, comprising:
a housing containing a data storage device and circuitry for controlling said data
storage device to write data, sent from said host device, onto said data storage device and to
read data for sending to said host device, said housing being external to said host device
5 wherein said housing is provided in the absence of being rigidly attached to said host device;

a communications channel for accommodating the sending of data from said data
storage device to said host device and from said host device to said data storage device;

a first user input device associated with said data storage apparatus;

10 circuitry, coupled to said data storage device, which, in response to a first input
provided on said user input device, performs a function on the host device.

10. Apparatus as claimed in claim 48 wherein said host device is a computer.

11. Apparatus as claimed in claim 10 wherein said substantially automatic storage
of data comprises performing a backup of at least part of the totality of data stored in said
computer.

15 12. Apparatus as claimed in claim 10 wherein said substantially automatic storage
of data comprises performing a backup of predetermined portions of data stored in said
computer.

20 13. Apparatus as claimed in claim 10 wherein said substantially automatic storage
of data comprises performing a backup of user-selectable portions or types of data stored in
said computer.

14. A method for use in connection with a data storage device, operatively coupled
to a host device, comprising:

25 providing a housing which contains said data storage device said housing being
external to said host device wherein said housing is provided in the absence of being rigidly
attached to said host device;

electronically controlling said data storage device to write data, sent from said host
device, onto said data storage device and to read data for sending to said host device over a
communications channel;

providing input via a user input device associated with said data storage device;

30 performing, in response to a first input provided on said user input device, a function
on said host device.

15. A method as claimed in claim 50 wherein said substantially automatic storing of data comprises performing a backup of at least part of the totality of data stored in said host device.

16. A method as claimed in claim 50 wherein said substantially automatic storing of data comprises performing a backup of predetermined portions of data stored in said host device.

17. A method as claimed in claim 50 wherein said substantially automatic storing of data comprises performing a backup of user-selectable portions or types of data stored in said host device.

18. A method as claimed in claim 14 wherein said user input device comprises a pressable button and wherein said step of providing input comprises pressing said pressable button.

19. Apparatus for use in connection with a data storage device, operatively coupled to a host device, comprising:

housing means for containing said data storage device, said housing means being external to said host device, wherein said housing means is non-rigidly attached to said host device;

means for controlling said data storage device to write data, sent from said host device, onto said data storage device and to read data for sending to said host device over a communications means;

a user input means, associated with said data storage apparatus;

means for performing, in response to a first input provided on said user input means, at least one of:

a user-selectable function wherein said function is performed at least partially on said host device; and

substantially automatic storage of data sent from said host device to said data storage device.

20. Apparatus as claimed in claim 19 wherein said communications means includes a communications channel selected from the group consisting of a Universal Serial Bus (USB) communications channel, an IEEE 1394 communications channel, a wireless communications channel and an Ethernet communications channel.

21. Apparatus as claimed in claim 19 wherein said user input means comprises a pressable button.

22. Apparatus as claimed in claim 19 further comprising means for providing an indication of the execution of at least one of said user-selectable function and said substantially automatic storage of data.

23. Apparatus for data backup, operatively coupled to a host computer,
5 comprising:
a disk drive;
a housing containing said disk drive, said housing and disk drive being external to said host computer wherein said housing is non-rigidly attached to said host computer;
circuitry which controls said disk drive to write data, sent from said host computer,
10 onto said disk drive and to read data for sending to said host computer over a communications channel;
a push button mounted on said housing;
circuitry configured to perform a backup of at least selected data stored in said computer, onto said disk drive, in response to activation of said push button, wherein said
15 backup includes sending commands from said host computer to said disk drive.

24. Apparatus as claimed in claim 23 further comprising an indicator which indicates initiation, progress or completion of said backup.

25. A method for data backup, operatively coupled to a host computer,
comprising:
20 mounting a disk drive in a housing, said housing and disk drive being external to said host computer wherein said housing is non-rigidly attached to said host computer;
controlling said disk drive to write data, sent from said host computer, onto said disk drive and to read data for sending to said host computer over a communications channel;
rigidly mounting a push button on said housing, operatively connected, at least
25 indirectly, to said disk drive;
performing a backup of at least selected data stored in said host computer, onto said disk drive, in response to activation of said push button.

26. A method, as claimed in claim 25, further comprising providing configuration information relating to said backup, prior to normal use of said disk drive for backup.

27. A method, as claimed in claim 26 wherein said configuration information
30 includes identification of drives, directories, sub-directories, files or file types designated for backup.

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28. A method, as claimed in claim 26 wherein said configuration information includes designation of a backup destination.

29. Apparatus for data backup, operatively coupled to a host computer, comprising:

5 a disk drive;

a housing containing said disk drive;

circuitry which controls said disk drive to write data, sent from said host computer, onto said disk drive;

a push button operatively coupled to said housing;

10 circuitry configured to receive information indicative of status information of said push button and to pass said information indicative of said status information of said push button to said host computer;

said host computer configured to respond to said information indicative of said status information of said push button by executing software which is configured to store first information in said host computer onto said disk drive.

15 30. Apparatus as claimed in claim 29 wherein said housing is non-rigidly attached to said host device.

31. Apparatus for data backup, capable of communication with a host computer, the apparatus comprising:

20 a disk drive;

a housing containing said disk drive;

a push button operatively coupled to said housing;

first circuitry configured to receive information indicative of a status of said push button;

25 said host computer configured to respond to said information indicative of said status of said push button by executing software which is configured to store at least first information onto said disk drive;

wherein said disk drive is coupled to bridge circuitry which provides for serial-to-parallel data conversion and wherein said first circuitry is provided on said bridge circuitry.

30 32. Apparatus, as claimed in claim 29, wherein said disk drive is coupled to drive control circuitry which includes control of an actuator arm of said disk drive and wherein said first circuitry is provided on said drive control circuitry.

33. Apparatus as claimed in claim 29 wherein said host computer is configured to respond to said information indicative of said status of said push button by periodically polling to determine said status of said push button.

34. Apparatus as claimed in claim 29 wherein said host computer is configured to respond to said information indicative of said status of said push button by receiving an asynchronous message from said first circuitry.

35. Apparatus for data backup, operative coupled, by a communication channel, to a host computer, the apparatus comprising:

a disk drive;

a push button;

circuitry configured to receive information indicative of a status of said push button and to pass said information indicative of said status of said push button over said communications channel to said host computer;

said host computer configured to respond to said information indicative of said status of said push button, by executing software on said host computer, said software being configured to store first information in said host computer onto said disk drive.

36. Apparatus as claimed in claim 29 or 35 wherein said software includes software for querying a binder database to determine at least one of a backup application name and a backup script name.

37. Apparatus as claimed in claim 36 wherein said software includes software for executing said backup application, using said script name as a parameter.

38. Apparatus as claimed in claim 7, wherein said operation of said user-activatable button is an operation that is limited to a single press of said user-activatable button.

39. Apparatus as claimed in claim 23 wherein said circuitry configured to perform a backup includes circuitry wherein said backup includes sending commands to a source drive, different from said disk drive.

40. Apparatus, operatively coupled by a communications channel to a host computer, the host computer having a first disk drive, said first disk drive being internal to said host computer, the apparatus comprising:

a second disk drive;

a user-activatable button, associated with said second disk drive;

circuitry which, in response to a press of said user-activatable button, causes a backup

of at least some data from said first disk drive, internal to said host computer, to said second disk drive.

41. Apparatus for backup of data, said data being accessible to a host computer over a first communication channel, wherein said first communications channel includes a first bus of said host computer, said apparatus comprising:

a disk drive, which communicates with said host computer over a second communications channel, said second communications channel being different from said first communications channel and wherein said second communications channel is selected from the group consisting of a Universal Serial Bus (USB) communications channel, an IEEE 1394 communications channel, a wireless communications channel and an Ethernet communications channel;

a push button;

circuitry configured to receive information indicative a status of said push button; and

said host computer configured to respond to said information indicative of said status of said push button by executing software which is configured to store at least some of said data onto said disk drive.

42. A method for use in connection with a data storage device in communication with a host device over a communication channel, the data storage device being external to said host device, the method comprising:

providing input via a user input device, said user input device being associated with said data storage device, wherein said user input device is associated with said data storage device by receiving input from said user input device before any notification of said input is provided to said host device;

performing, in response to a first input provided on said user input device, at least one

of:

a user-selectable function wherein said function is performed at least partially on said host device; and

substantially automatic storing of data sent from said host device to said data storage device.

43. A method for use in connection with a data storage device in communication with a host device over a communication channel, the data storage device being external to said host device, the method comprising:

providing input via a user input device, said user input device being associated with said data storage device, wherein said user input device is associated with said data storage device by receiving input from said user input device in the absence of a need to first provide said input to said host device;

5 performing, in response to at least a first input provided on said user input device, at least one of:

a user-selectable function wherein said function is performed at least partially on said host device; and

10 substantially automatic storing of data sent from said host device to said data storage device.

44. Apparatus for data backup, in communication with a host computer, the apparatus comprising:

a disk drive;

a push button;

15 said host computer configured to respond to a press of said push button by executing software on said host computer, said software being configured to backup at least first information in said host computer onto said disk drive, wherein, during normal use, pressing said push button suffices, substantially by itself, to initiate said backup, in the absence of a need for user input other than said pressing of said push button.

20 45. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said circuitry is operatively coupled to said second disk drive.

46. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said second disk drive is not housed in a computer.

25 47. Apparatus as claimed in claim 9 wherein said function performed by said circuitry includes a user-selectable function performed at least partially on said host device.

48. Apparatus as claimed in claim 9 wherein said function performed by said circuitry includes substantially automatic storage of data sent from said host device to said data storage device.

30 49. A method as claimed in claim 14 wherein said step of performing includes performing a user-selectable function at least partially on said host device.

50. A method as claimed in claim 14 wherein said step of performing includes substantially automatic storing of data sent from said host device to said data storage device at least partially by executing software on said host device.

51. Apparatus as claimed in claim 29 wherein said information indicative of said status information of said push button includes a button status.

52. Apparatus as claimed in claim 29 wherein said information indicative of said status information of said push button includes a button status change.

5 53. Apparatus as claimed in claim 31 wherein said bridge circuitry includes a microprocessor.

54. Apparatus as claimed in claim 31 wherein said bridge circuitry includes firmware.